

APPENDICES

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 SEPTEMBER 2004

REQUEST FOR: APPLICATION TO LEASE BUILDING

LOCATION: HUNTINGTREE PARK, HUNTINGTREE ROAD, HALESOWEN

(As shown on the plan attached)

BACKGROUND

An application has been received to lease one of the buildings in Huntingtree Park, Huntingtree Road, Halesowen that are used for changing room facilities (as shown outlined in black on the plan attached) for the purposes of a day nursery facility.

The applicant considers that it would be an ideal site for a nursery provision as it is situated in a residential area, close to a primary school and nearby Council play facilities, and in an area, which currently has a deficit of child care provision.

An additional application has been received from a voluntary organisation called the New Hall Project for the same building, which is supported by the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning to provide alternative education to students of 14 and 15 years old.

This organisation offers a Community Theatre Course to NVQ Level 2 and has been using the building at Huntingtree Park for the past 2 years on an informal basis. This has given them space to design and construct theatre sets and to perform for local primary schools and invited audiences. The students gain exemplary reports from external moderators, they have also begun to build very positive relationships with neighbourhood schools, presenting them with challenging plays on issues of bullying, the environment and refugees. When returning after the Easter holidays, the building had been seriously vandalised and both lighting equipment and power tools had been stolen and were not insured due to the unofficial use of the building.

To use this building on a formal basis with a commercial or a concessionary lease would mean that they could insure their equipment and invest in a high level of security.

The land was originally purchased under the provisions of the Housing Act 1936, but appropriated to the Directorate of the Urban Environment (Cultural and Community Services) in 1965.

COMMENTS

All of the relevant Council Directorates have been consulted in respect of both applications. Objections have been received from the Directorate of the Urban Environment and Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning as regards to the day nursery facility, which advise that the building is extensively used by the Youth Service, and additionally, it is heavily used by football teams as changing rooms during the winter period.

However, no objections to the lease of the property to the voluntary organisation have been received from the Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning, although the Directorate of the Urban Environment advise that part of the adjoining car park is used as a recycling centre, therefore car parking staff, etc. would be a concern. Additionally, as long as the football teams can use and have access to the changing rooms and toilets, there is no objection to this request.

No objections have been received from the Directorate of Law and Property stating that as the voluntary organisation have been using these premises informally for the past 2 years it would be reasonable for this to continue with authorisation. Additionally, for this lease to be recommended for approval provided that the site is not being used for the sale of alcohol.

PROPOSAL

That the Area Committee advise the Lead Member for Leisure to recommend approval for the lease to the voluntary organisation on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Law and Property and refuse the application for the day nursery.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Letter(s) from the applicant.
2. E-mails and memos from the Council Directorates.

Contact Officer: Sonia McLean, Property Manager, Ext. 5321